

S . S. Kresge Store No. 20
(Drug Fair)

1938; 1955 addition

119-123 W. Lexington Street; 116-120 Liberty Street
Private

The Lexington Street/Park Avenue section of the S. S. Kresge Company Store No. 20 is a fine example of the Art Deco or Modernistic style. The geometric decorative elements are balanced by the sweeping curve of the facade and the subsidiary curves of the plate glass windows flanking the entrance. The building also is covered in white glazed terra cotta panels, a surface treatment common in the style. The window bays are highly organized, with green terra cotta spandrels separating the floor levels. The curving corner was a favorite motif of the later Art Deco movement.

Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic S.S. Kresge Store No. 20 (preferred)

and/or common Drug Fair

2. Location

street & number 119-123 W. Lexington Street; 116-120 Liberty St. ☐ not for publicationcity, town Baltimore ☐ vicinity of ☐ congressional district 3rdstate Maryland ☐ county

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name Lexington Park Associates c/o Hicks & Rotner Associates

street & number 2360 West Joppa Road telephone no.: 823-4250

city, town Lutherville state and zip code Maryland 21093

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Baltimore City Courthouse liber SEB 300

street & number Fayette and Calvert Streets folio 535

city, town Baltimore state Maryland

6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title Baltimore Neighborhood Survey

date 1976 ☐ federal ☐ state ☐ county ☒ local

depository for survey records Commission for Historical and Architectural Preservation

city, town Baltimore state Maryland

7. Description

Survey No. B-2321

Condition

☐ excellent
☒ good
☐ fair

☐ deteriorated
☐ ruins
☐ unexposed

Check one

☐ unaltered
☒ altered

Check one

☒ original site
☐ moved date of move _____

Prepare both a summary paragraph and a general description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

SUMMARY

The S.S. Kresge 5 & 10¢ Store (Drug Fair) is comprised of a three story 1938 commercial building with a curving facade on the southeast corner of West Lexington Street and Park Avenue and a 1955 two-story addition with a facade on the west side of Liberty Street in central Baltimore, Maryland. The Lexington Street section has a glazed terra cotta and glass facade with Art Deco geometric motifs. The original Kresge signs have been removed and the modern Drug Fair logo and colors now predominate. The Liberty Street facade of brick and glass block is virtually unchanged except for the removal of the Kresge sign.

General Description:

Lexington Street section: The three-story building is basically rectangular in plan with a long west elevation on Park Avenue and a short north elevation on West Lexington Street. The corner curves in a streamlined manner with a main entrance on the curve. A second entrance on the north side originally led to a stairway to the basement sales area. The stairway is now closed off and the entrance gives access only to the main floor. Most of the wall surface on the north elevation and the corner arc is plate glass on a green marble paneled base with geometric patterned aluminum frames. The windows flanking the recessed entrances are bowed. The glass and aluminum doors formerly had push bars with the name "Kresge's" which were removed along with all other Kresge's identification in 1984 when the building was sold.

The west elevation continues the plate glass from the corner on part of the first floor, changing to terra cotta piers alternating with plate glass windows. Near the southwest corner of the building is a service entrance, set back from the street. The terra cotta panels curve around the door jambs and a red bakelite panel is located above the doorway. This was originally a second entrance to the lower floor and opens into an areaway with pink marble paneled walls and stairway. It is now used as storage and access to the upper floors and basement.

The upper facade of the Lexington Street section is faced with white glazed terra cotta panels framing the window bays which are offset by green glazed terra cotta panels. The north elevation has two bays and the west elevation has eight. At the corner is a large single bay with industrial windows above an illuminated clock. Below the clock is a panel where the original Kresge's sign was located. It is now filled in with the Drug Fair logo. Below the panel and extending along the spandrel between the first and second floors is a strip of red bakelite on which the complete name of the store was lettered, along with a large "5 and 10" over the corner curve. Smaller drug store logos are positioned on the bakelite on each elevation.

(continue, please)

8. Significance

Survey No. B-2321

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1938; 1955 addition **Builder/Architect** Emil G. Jehle, 1955 addition

check: Applicable Criteria: ☐ A ☐ B ☒ C ☐ D
and/or

Applicable Exception: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

Level of Significance: ☐ national ☐ state ☒ local

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

SUMMARY:

The Lexington Street/Park Avenue section of the S.S. Kresge Company Store No. 20 is a fine example of the Art Deco or Modernistic style. The geometric decorative elements are balanced by the sweeping curve of the facade and the subsidiary curves of the plate glass windows flanking the entrance. The building also is covered in white glazed terra cotta panels, a surface treatment common in the style. The window bays are highly organized, with green terra cotta spandrels separating the floor levels. The curving corner was a favorite motif of the later Art Deco movement.

The S. S. Kresge 5 and 10¢ Store began in the late 1890's with stores in the Detroit area. By the early 20th century, the chain had expanded to about 20 stores and was quickly approaching the sales volume of the perennial leader in variety store sales, F.W. Woolworth Company. Kresge Store No. 20 in Baltimore opened in 1909 at 221 West Lexington Street, where it remained for two years.

In 1911, the Kresge Store moved to 113-117 West Lexington Street, occupying a late 19th century storefront building. No photographs or drawings of the original Kresge's building have yet been located. It is probable that the building resembled other commercial structures of the period which still exist in altered forms on the 100 through 300 blocks of West Lexington Street.

In early 1938, plans for a new, expanded store were announced. The corner property at Park Avenue and Lexington was acquired and the new building was designed to include 119-123 West Lexington. The store was possibly designed by Kresge's staff architects, but no specific names of designers have been discovered for the original section. The Depression caused a nation-wide decline in building activity, resulting in large corporations forming their own design divisions, drawing on the well-trained but often under-employed field of architects in the 1930's. (The K-Mart Corporation, successor to S.S. Kresge & Company, was unable to provide any historical information on

(continue, please)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Survey No. B-2321

Baltimore American, Jan. 9, 1938Baltimore Sun, Dec. 4, 1954; Nov. 19, 1955Cucchiella, Sherry, Baltimore Deco.Hicks & Rotner Associates, Inc.: 1955 floor plansSpilos, Steve. The S. S. Kresge Story. Racine Wisconsin: Western Publishing Co., 1979.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property _____

Quadrangle name Baltimore EastQuadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References do NOT complete UTM references

A	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
	Zone	Easting		Northing					

B	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
	Zone	Easting		Northing					

C	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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D	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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E	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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F	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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G	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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H	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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Verbal boundary description and justification

Co-terminous with lot 25, Block 621, irregular dimensions.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
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state	code	county	code
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title Janet Davis, Historical Preservation Analystorganization Comm. for Hist. & Arch. Pres. (C.H.A.P.) date December, 1985street & number 606 Tower Suites, 118 N. Howard Street telephone (301) 396-4866city or town Baltimore state Maryland 21201

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

6. The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to: Maryland Historical Trust
Shaw House
21 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
(301) 269-2438

7. Description, cont'd.
Page 2

Art Deco details are apparent in the shallow incised and elongated lines of the terra cotta panels. The piers between the window bays are fluted, as are the framing tiles of the sign panel at the corner. Above the windows are horizontal lines repeating and emphasizing the streamlined plane of the entire facade. In place of a cornice, the terra cotta panels terminate in a shallow band of geometric molding.

Liberty Street Section: The entire facade is buff paneled brick with a central entrance. Above the entrance is a ribbon window formed of glass block separated by concrete columns. The roof is flat. A new red domed awning shades the entrance, which has plate glass windows on each side of the glass and aluminum doors. When built in 1955, a stairway led down to the basement sales floor from just inside the doors. Aluminum railings in a streamlined Art Deco curve are still in place at the entrance and in the closed-off basement.

The interior of the Kresge's building is occupied only on the first floor and basement levels of the Lexington Street section. The first floor, now used as the public area of the Drug Fair store, retains shallowly curved and fluted moldings on the interior piers and ceiling. The lighting, paint, and store fixtures are new. The internal signage employs elongated curved lines which are in keeping with the general lines of the exterior style. The second and third floors are currently unoccupied. The second floor was designed for offices, storage, and food preparation rooms. The offices were located at the north end of the building overlooking Lexington Street and still contain a safe marked with the store name. The kitchen area had a separate room for the making of doughnuts. The third floor was given over almost entirely to stock storage.

The Liberty Street section is reached by a door near the rear of the drug store. This door is not open for public use, but plans for the lease of the Liberty Street section could possibly include an enlarged connecting door for public access to both sections. The first floor of the Liberty Street section, when built, contained the expanded lunch counter and additional sales areas. The second floor was entirely stock storage space.

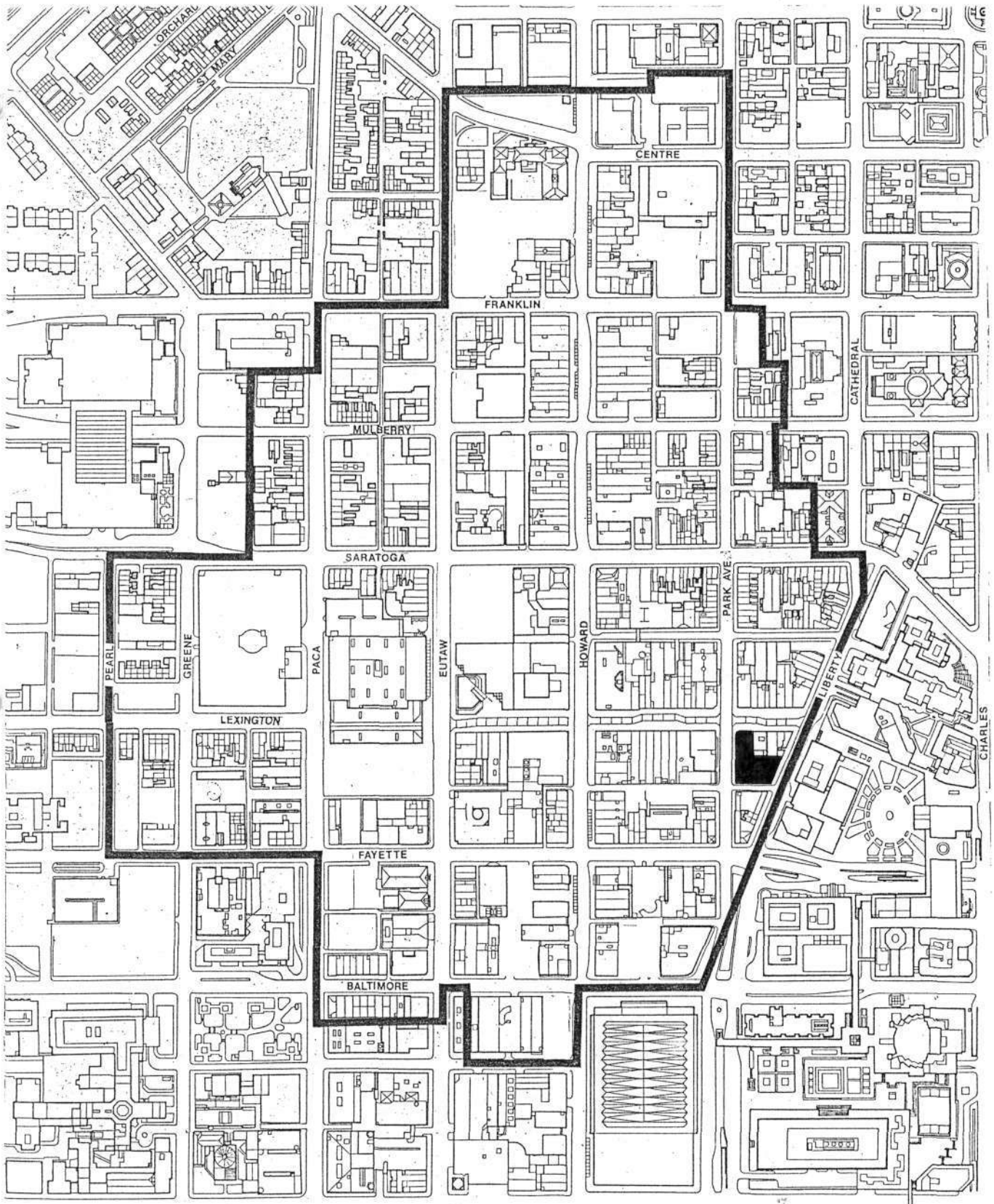
8. Significance, cont'd.

Page 2

store design in the 1930's, other than that found in The S.S. Kresge Story). The design of Store No. 20 is evidence of a high level of competence in what was in the late 1930's a popular style for commercial buildings.

A Baltimore American article in 1938 emphasized the convenience to the shopper of the new building, including air conditioning, a luncheonette, and a beauty salon. The store served these functions well for the World War II period, but in the early 1950's, business in the central city was in decline as the suburbs expanded and regional and neighborhood shopping centers were erected. In an effort to counter these developments, an addition to the Kresge Store was planned to be built in 1955 facing Liberty Street and adjoining the original section at its southeast corner. The buildings at 116, 118, and 120 Liberty Street were demolished. The addition was the work of Kresge's staff architects under the direction of Emil G. Jehle. The light colored brick, glass block, and ribbon windows represent the mainstream of commercial architectural design in the mid-1950's, just as the original section did for its time. The addition doubled the store's floor space to 53,000 square feet, expanding the lunch counter area and the beauty salon, and incorporating a half-mile of counter space, a new snack bar, and two levels of sales rooms.

In 1977, S. S. Kresge and Company changed its name to K mart Corporation. Kresge's Store No. 20 continued in business at 119-123 West Lexington Street until 1984 when the store closed and the building was sold to a limited partnership. Gray-Drug Fair leased the original section and opened a drug store in early 1985. Prior to the renovation by Drug Fair, the Art Deco Society of Baltimore and the City Salvage Depot removed certain fixtures which were considered typical of the original Art Deco style. These included the door push bars with the Kresge name, the neon signs from both entrances, portions of aluminum stair railings, and marble interior panels.



Baltimore Metrocenter Survey
 Market Center
 S.S. Kresge Store No. 20
 119-123 West Lexington Street
 B-2321





S.S. Kresge 5 & 10¢ Store B-2321
119-123 West Lexington Street
Market Center - Metrocenter Survey
Baltimore (City), Maryland
Photo: Janet Davis
September 1985
Neg. loc.: Maryland Historical Trust
Northwest corner view
1/6



A black and white photograph of a building entrance. The entrance is framed by two large, curved columns made of light-colored rectangular tiles. The columns have a darker, textured base. Above the entrance is a dark, recessed area. A sign above the double doors reads "DRUGFAIR SERVICE ENTRANCE". To the right of the entrance is a dark, recessed area, possibly a doorway or a large window. The building's facade is composed of large, light-colored rectangular tiles. The entrance is dark, suggesting it is either nighttime or the interior is very dark.

DRUGFAIR SERVICE ENTRANCE

S.S. Kresge 5 & 10¢ Store B-2321
119-123 West Lexington Street
Market Center - Metrocenter Survey
Baltimore (City), Maryland
Photo: Janet Davis
September 1985
Neg. loc.: Maryland Historical Trust
Park Ave. entrance detail
2/6



S.S. Kresge 5 & 10¢ Store B-2321

119-123 West Lexington Street

Market Center - Metrocenter Survey

Baltimore (City), Maryland

Photo: Janet Davis

September 1985

Neg. loc.: Maryland Historical Trust

Detail, second story corner

3/6



S.S. Kresge 5 & 10¢ Store B-2321

119-123 West Lexington Street

Market Center - Metrocenter Survey

Baltimore (City), Maryland

Photo: Janet Davis

Septbmer 1985

Neg. loc.: Maryland Historical Trust

Detail, second story bay

4/6



1

S.S. Kresge 5 & 10¢ Store B-2321
119-123 West Lexington Street
Market Center - Metrocenter Survey
Baltimore (City), Maryland
Photo: Janet Davis
September 1985
Neg. loc.: Maryland Historical Trust
Detail, terra cotta tile
5/ 6



S.S.Kresge 5 & 10¢ Store B-2321
119-123 West Lexington Street
Market Center - Metrocenter Survey
Baltimore (City), Maryland
Photo: Janet Davis
September 1985
Neg. loc.: Maryland Historical Trust
Park Avenue entrance
6/6

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST

620 116
B-2321

MAG#0423215811

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Kresge's

AND/OR COMMON

Kresge's

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

123 W. Lexington Street

CITY, TOWN

Baltimore

— VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

Maryland

COUNTY

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

—DISTRICT

☒ BUILDING(S)

—STRUCTURE

—SITE

—OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

—PUBLIC

☒ PRIVATE

—BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

—IN PROCESS

—BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

☒ OCCUPIED

☒ UNOCCUPIED

—WORK IN PROGRESS

ACCESSIBLE

—YES: RESTRICTED

☒ YES: UNRESTRICTED

—NO

PRESENT USE

—AGRICULTURE

☒ COMMERCIAL

—EDUCATIONAL

—ENTERTAINMENT

—GOVERNMENT

—INDUSTRIAL

—MILITARY

—MUSEUM

—PARK

—PRIVATE RESIDENCE

—RELIGIOUS

—SCIENTIFIC

—TRANSPORTATION

—OTHER

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Telephone #:

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

— VICINITY OF

STATE, zip code

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Records Office Room 601

STREET & NUMBER

Baltimore City Courthouse

CITY, TOWN

Baltimore

STATE

Maryland

Liber #:

Folio #:

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

City of Baltimore Neighborhood Survey

DATE

1976

—FEDERAL —STATE —COUNTY ☒ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

COMMISSION FOR HISTORICAL &
ARCHITECTURAL PRESERVATION

CITY, TOWN

Room 900
26 South Calvert St.
Baltimore Md 21202

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

B-2321

CONDITION

☐ EXCELLENT
☒ GOOD
☐ FAIR

☐ DETERIORATED
☐ RUINS
☐ UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

☒ UNALTERED
☐ ALTERED

CHECK ONE

☒ ORIGINAL SITE
☐ MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

This store, dating from the later '30s, is three stories high, two bays wide on the north side, one on the rounded northwest corner, and eight on the east side.

On the first story's west side are eight bays of sheet glass windows which are placed in flat arches. Flat stone pilasters separate these windows. On the northwest corner is a chamfered entrance containing four glass doors, above which is a tripartite sheet glass transom. On the north side is another entrance with four glass doors and transom. Above the first story is a projecting cornice which projects slightly further over the northwest entrance.

Above the cornice is a frieze sheathed in polished, red-painted metal, bearing the name of the store. Over the northwest entrance of the store, above the frieze, is a rectangular area containing glass bricks, over which Kresge's is spelled in yellow letters.

Second and third story windows are grouped three to a bay between two story-high flat, fluted pilasters. The windows are double casement with one piece transoms and underlights. Between the first and second story windows is a decorative green stone panel with horizontal fluting contained within U-shaped incisions. This is repeated between the second and third story, but here the incisions are inverted. Above the third story windows are fluted, flat arched lintels of green stone. Five rows of horizontal incisions appear over each third story window. The building is capped by a parapet.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

8 SIGNIFICANCE**PERIOD****AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW**

<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

1937

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

A good example of later 1930's Deco-inspired commercial architecture.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY _____

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE

COUNTY

STATE

COUNTY

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Planning Assistant

ORGANIZATION

COMMISSION FOR HISTORICAL &
ARCHITECTURAL PRESERVATION
Room 900

DATE

1976

STREET & NUMBER

26 South Calvert St.

TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN

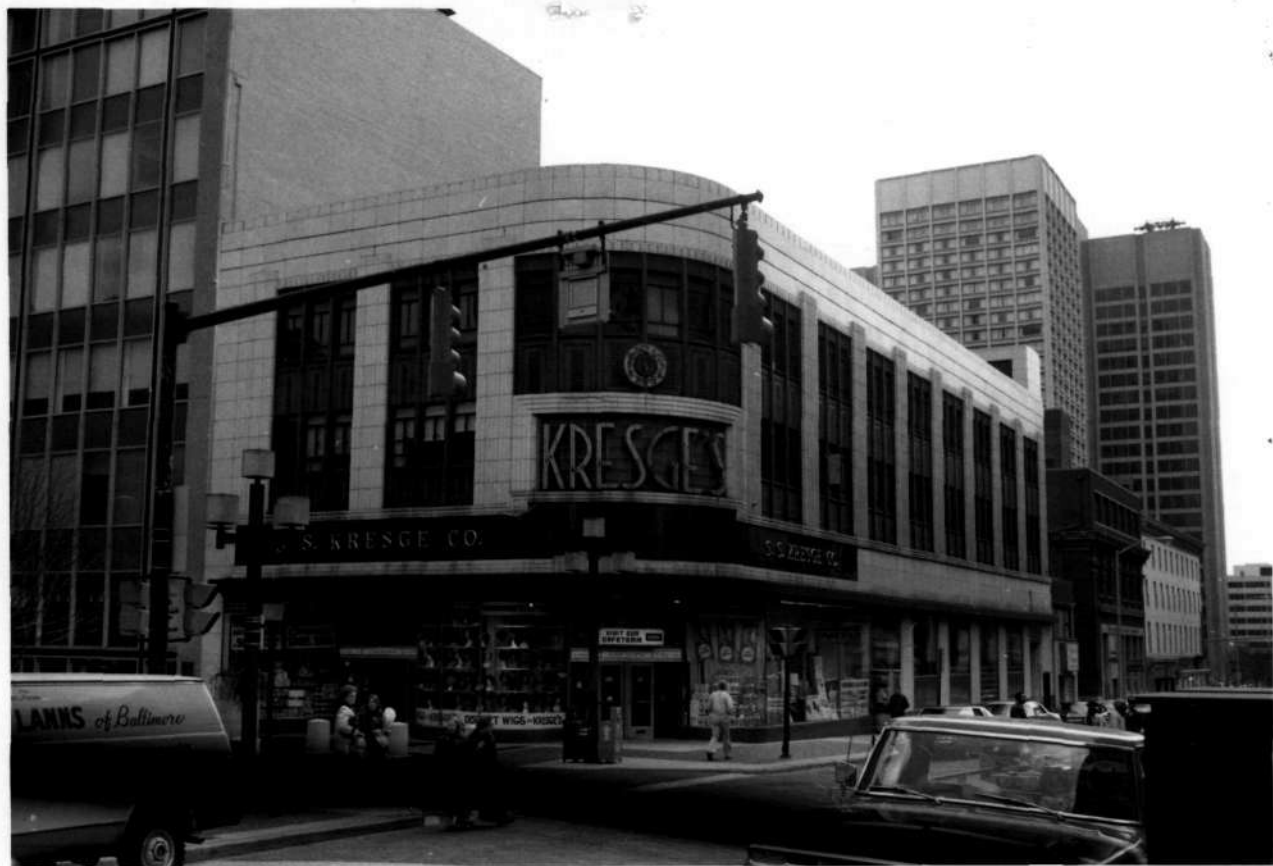
Baltimore, Md. 21202

STATE

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The Survey and Inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

RETURN TO: Maryland Historical Trust
The Shaw House, 21 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
(301) 267-1438



B-2321

BLOCK 621
117-123 W. Lex.
Kresge's

neg. no. 28

2/76